

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SAJ-01 OMB-01 ACDA-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /100 W

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R 171336Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7559

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 4557

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, US, EG

SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO FAHMI STATEMENT

REF: TEL AVIV 4528

1. ALL ISRAELI PRESS GIVES PROMINENT COVERAGE TO IMPLICATIONS OF FAHMI'S JULY 15 STATEMENT RE UNEF MANDATE, BOTH IN FRONTPAGE REPORTS ON PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S KNESSET STATEMENT AND SECRETARY'S MILWAUKEE SPEECH AND IN EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES.

2. ISRAELI PRESS IS UNANIMOUS IN ITS PRAISE FOR CONTENT AND TONE OF PRIME MINISTER'S JULY 16 KNESSET STATEMENT (REFTEL) WHICH IS SEEN AS STRIKING APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN READINESS TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS FOR INTERIM AGREEMENT AND DETERMINATION NOT TO BUCKLE UNDER TO EGYPTIAN PRESSURE FOR ACCELERATION OF NEGOTIATING PACE. PRESS EXPRESSES HOPE THAT GOI WILL SUSTAIN
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THIS POSITION AND NOT ALLOW EGYPTIAN POSITION TO LEAD

TO BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS.

3. PRESS DEVOTES EXTENSIVE SPACE TO ANALYSIS OF EGYPTIAN MOTIVATIONS. MAIN THEME IS THAT EGYPT IS ATTEMPTING TO PRESSURE ISREL INTO SPEEDING UP ITS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS RE INTERIM AGREEMENT. ALL COMMENTATORS AGREE THAT SUCH EGYPTIAN EFFORTS CAN ONLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. PRESS INTERPRETS GOE POSITION RE POSSIBLE CONTINUATION OF UNEF WITHOUT

EGYPTIAN CONSENT AS EFFORT TO CREATE SITUATION OF CONTINUOUS, RATHER THAN PERIODIC, PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. ISRAELIS ALSO THINK THAT EGYPTIANS PLAN TO USE DEBATE IN UNSC ON UNEF MANDATE AS FORUM FOR DEMONSTRATING TO WORLD OPINION THAT ISRAEL IS DRAGGING ITS FEET IN REACHING INTERIM AGREEMENT. YET ANOTHER CONTENTION IS THAT EGYPTIAN AIM IS TO FORCE CHANGE IN ROLE OF UN FROM ONE OF MAINTAINING STATUS QUO TO ONE OF ASSURING COMPLETE ISRAELI EVACUATION OF SINAI, CHANGE WHICH IT IS FELT WOULD SERIOUSLY REDUCE ABILITY OF UNEF TO POLICE NEW AGREEMENT NOW BEING NEGOTIATED.

4. AS REGARDS IMPLICATIONS OF FAHMI STATEMENT ON US/EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, PRESS BELIEVES THAT IT WILL NOW BE HARDER FOR US (AND EUROPEANS) TO PRESENT IMAGE OF EGYPT AS RESPONSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE FORCE IN MIDDLE EAST. PRESS HIGHLIGHTS SECRETARY'S MILWAUKEE SPEECH, SEEING IT AS FIRST DEMONSTRATION ON HIS PART OF CRITICAL ATTITUDE TO EGYPT. ON OTHER HAND JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL BELIEVES US STATEMENTS THAT DELAY IN CONCLUDING AGREEMENT COULD HAVE AFFECT ON US/ISRAEL RELATIONS PROBABLY ENCOURAGED EGYPT IN ITS PRESENT COURSE, AND THAT THEREFOR USG SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BY LATEST DEVELOPMENTS. ARAB AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR, SPEAKING ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWS YESTERDAY EVENING, EVEN IMPLIED THAT US MAY HAVE KNOWN IN ADVANCE OF EGYPTIAN INTENTIONS AND FAILED TO TRY TO BLICK IT.

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5. PRESS ALSO CONSIDERS POSSIBLE US ROLE IN UNSC DEBATE. MAARIV EDITORIALIST WRITES THAT SECREATRY, IN COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR JANUARY 1974 GOE/GOI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, PROMISED THE UNEF WOULD BE REMOVABLE ONLY BY UNSC VOTE AND THAT USG WOULD VETO SUCH A STEP IF PROPOSAL CAME UP. THIS PROVISION REPORTEDLY WAS TO ANSWER ISRAELI CONCERN TO AVOID REPLY OF UNEF REMOVAL AT EGYPTIAN INSISTENCE

PRECEDING JUNE 1967 WAR. EDITORIALIST NOTES THAT
SECRETARY HAS SO FAR ONLY SAID THAT HE IS DISPLEASED
BY EGYPTIAN STEP BUT NOT THAT IT IS CONTRARY TO
DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT.
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